1961

THE FIRST CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL ENCAMPMENT
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
AND AUXILIARY

"THE GREAT EVALUATION"

(A Credo inspired by Lincoln's Gettysburg Address)

ONE HUNDRED YEARS ago, Our Fathers established this Nation as a new concept in Liberty — introducing a new dimension in the Social Conscience — wherein the self-discipline of a free people brought them much closer to the abolishment of superiority of birth and the realization of equality of opportunity. A whole race of God's children ceased to be classified as beasts of burden and were recognized as men.

Now we are engaged in a world-wide conflict of ideologies, testing whether this Extension of Freedom to all Races can be best assured by those who respect the rights of the individual — or those who subordinate the individual to the will of the self-appointed masters.

We are given a Time for Total Recall — "The Civil War Centennial." During this Great Evaluation, we must find out why we came the way we have and what the road is that we must follow. We must examine the dangers we faced in the Past, so that we may be better able to prepare for those ahead. This "Time" is given us to help prepare to meet the same basic problems, that a full cycle of history has again confronted us — magnified in scope and complexity.

But, in a deeper sense, we cannot understand the problems probed, nor the answers made, until we have focussed our attention, at appropriate moments, to the events as they occurred and the people that were involved. This is the "Time" we look back — and remember that the choices we made in hate and prejudice brought returns in blood and agony — that, when we gave of ourselves, we reaped a golden harvest "brimful and flowing over."

It is for us now to re-capitulate — to assess our gains and write-off our losses for the 100 years that have passed. To promote our highest ideals. To emulate our Union Fathers in their most effective civilian embodiment — The Grand Army of the Republic — and adhere firmly and faithfully to the principles of Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty — advanced now to include all men everywhere.

In this way, once again "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" will purge itself of little greeds and become, once again, the hope of the oppressed and exploited of every clime.

This, then, is why we turn to the Centennial and that "Time" of world-shaking decisions — The Civil War. Are the millions in misery (who will endure no more) to turn toward the false promises of the cynical and the godless — or will they turn to those upon whom the Lord has smiled — for a share of His bounty?

May we all, from this study of the Past, gain the understanding we need to deal with the Present and plan for the Future!

Let us, then, during this Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Civil War, make the firm resolve that, we, the living, shall deserve the sacrifices of the dead by devoting ourselves in service (as they did so long ago) and, in our program for the Future, consider those yet unborn—by building today with the enduring materials of honesty, integrity, and the cement of human kindness.

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